

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 1239

USIA PASS IEA

E.O. 11652: GDX-1
TAGS: PINT, PINS, ID, SOPN
SUBJECT: GOI CLAIMS NO GENERALS DETAINED/APPARENT AGREEMENT TO
PERMIT SUSPENDED PAPERS TO RENEWS PUBLICATIONS

REF: JAKARTA 1175 (DTG 260950Z JAN 78)

1. SUMMARY: THE GOI HAS DENIED THAT ANY SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS HAVE BEEN DETAINED. THERE ARE NOW UNCONFIRMED REPORTS, HOWEVER, THAT INDONESIAN AMBASSADOR TO SOUTH KOREA MAY GEN SARWO EDHIE IS UNDER HOUSE ARREST. PUBLISHERS OF THE SEVEN BANNED NEWSPAPERS BELIEVE AN AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED PERMITTING THEIR DAILIES TO AGAIN PUBLISH NEXT WEEK, BUT THEY ARE UNEASY ABOUT POSSIBLE FUTURE GOI MEDDLING WITH THE PRESS. END SUMMARY.

2. THE GOVERNMENT OF INDONESIA (GOI), IN SEPARATE PRONOUNCEMENTS BY KOPKAMTIB CHIEF OF STAFF ADM. SUDOMO AND ARMED FORCES COMMANDER GEN PANGGABEAN, HAS DENIED
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THAT ANY SENIOR ARMED FORCES (ABRI) OFFICERS HAVE BEEN DETAINED IN THE CURRENT CRACKDOWN. SUDOMO, RESPONDING TO QUERIES AT A PRESS CONFERENCE, SAID THAT "NO GENERALS HAVE BEEN ARRESTED" AND FOR PROOF GESTURED TOWARD TWO OF THOSE RUMORED UNDER DETENTION, ABRI DEPUTY COMMANDER GEN SURONO AND SUPREME ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBER (RETIRED) GEN ALAMSYAH, WHO WERE SITTING BESIDE HIM. HE ALSO

DENIED THAT FORMER JAKARTA GOVERNOR LT GEN ALI SADIKIN HAD BEEN DETAINED, SAYING THAT SADIKIN LIVED ACROSS THE STREET FROM HIM AND "IS HOME NOW." PANGGABEAN TOLD REPORTERS AT A LATER PRESS CONFERENCE THAT, "I HAVE SEEN NO REPORTS OF ABRI BEING ARRESTED." HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT "AS FAR AS I KNOW" ASEAN SECRETARY GENERAL MAJ GEN DHARSONO, ALSO THE SUBJECT OF MANY RUMORS, STILL HOLDS HIS ASEAN JOB AND "NO LEGAL ACTION IS CONTEMPLATED AGAINST HIM". ALI SADIKIN AND SURONO APPEARED AT THE AUSTRALIAN NATINAL DAY RECEPTION LAST NIGHT (JAN 26) BUT DHARSONO, WHOSE RECALL FROM ASEAN IS THE SUBJECT OF SEPTTEL, SENT LAST MINUTE REGRETS.

3. DESPITE THESE SPICIFIC DENIALS, RUMORS OF GOI MOVES AGAINST SENIOR ABRI CONTINUE TO CIRCULATE. THE LATEST TARGET OF SPECULATION IS INDONESIA'S AMBASSADOR TO SOUTH KOREA MAJ GEN SARWO EDHIE, STILL SOMETHING OF A STUDENT HERO BECAUSE OF HIS SUPPORT OF ACTIVISTS IN 1966. ACCORDING TO ONE UNCONFIRMED REPORT, SARWO EDHIE RETURNED TO JAKARTA SOME TEN DAYS AGAO AND, FOLLOWING A MEETING WITH DHARSONO AND LT. GEN KEMAL IDRIS (YET ANOTHER TARGET OF RUMOR), WAS PLACED UNDER HOUSE ARREST.

4. IT NOW APPEARS THAT AN UNEASY TRUCE HAS BEEN REACHED BETWEEN THE GOI AND THE EDITORS OF THE SEVEN SUSPENDED NEWSPAPERS. AFTER A HARD DAY'S BARGAINING, CONFIDENTIAL

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THE EDITORS AS PART OF THE SETTLEMENT HAVE ADDRESSED A LETTER TO PRESIDENT SUHARTO EXPRESSING "A FEELING OF CONCERN" ABOUT THE SUSPENSION OF THEIR PAPERS BUT ADDING, "WE ARE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE STEP WHICH HAS BEEN TAKEN..." THE EDITORS ALSO PROMISED TO PRACTICE INTROSPECTION, "WHICH IS THE OBLIGATION OF EVERY CITIZEN, PUBLIC INSTITUTION AND OF THE GOVERNMENT, IN ACCORD WITH THE SUGGESTION OF THE PRESIDENT." REPORTEDLY THE PHRASE "...AND OF THE GOVERNMENT..." WAS ADDED AT THE INSISTENCE OF THE EDITORS, WHILE THE GOI INSISTED ON THE INCLUSION OF REFERENCE TO THE PRESIDENT. THE EDITORS BELIVE THAT THE WAY HAS NOW BEEN CLEARED FOR THEIR RESUMPTION OF PUBLICATION NEXT WEEK.

5. THE WEEKLY MAGAZINE TEMP PUBLISHED YESTERDAY, AFTER REPLACING ITS ORIGINAL COVER (SHOWING SUHARTO'S FACE APPEARING ON A KING OF CLUBS PLAYING CARD) WITH ONE DISPLAYING THE MASTHEADS OF THE SEVEN BANNED NEWS-PAPERS. THE MAGAZINE ALSO DROPPED ONE ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED, PROVOCATIVE LETTER TO THE EDITOR ABOUT THE DECEMBER 15 ABRI STATEMENT BUT OTHERWISE PUBLISHED AS PLANNED. ITS COVERAGE OF THE RECENT CRACKDOWN IS BRIEF

AND STRAIGHTFORWARD, WITH NO REPETITION OF RUMORS OR MENTION OF APPARENTLY TABOO ITEMS, SUCH AS THE "INTEL-LECTUALS AND ARTISTS" PROTEST STATEMENT ISSUED EARLIER IN THE WEEK BUT SO FAR IGNORED BY THE LOCAL PRESS. THERE ARE CONFLICTING REPORTS ABOUT WHETHER TEMPO'S UNACCUSTOMED BLANDNESS IS THE RESULT OF A UNILATERAL SENSE OF SELF-PRESERVATION ON THE PART OF THE EDITORS OR PRE-PUBLICATION NEGOTIATION WITH THE GOI.

6. COMMENT. THERE HAS BEEN SOME EASING OF TENSION HERE, WITH MANY OF THE WILDEST RUMORS DYING OUT OR FORMALLY LAID TO REST AND THE PRESS SUSPENSION APPARENTLY ABOUT TO END. THE SITUATION REMAINS DANGEROUS, HOWEVER, WITH PROVOCATIVE ACTION FROM ANY OF THE PLAYERS LIKELY TO CONFIDENTIAL

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LEAD TO A QUICK RESPONSE FROM OTHERS. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ALREADY BEGUN MAKING NOISES, FOR EXAMPLE, ABOUT A "RETOOLING" OF THE JAKARTA PRESS, TO INCLUDE GOVERNMENT SUGGESTIONS TO INDIVIDUAL PAPERS THAT THEY JETTISON SOME OF THEIR MOST AGGRESSIVE REPORTERS. IF THE GOI PUSHES THIS, ANOTHER PRESS/GOVERNMENT SHOWDOWN IS VERY POSSIBLE. MASTERS

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